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Carol Hanlon  
S&ER Products Manager  
U.S. Department of Energy  
Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Office  
P. O. Box 30307 M/S 025  
North Las Vegas, NV 89036-0707

Subject: Public Comments Yucca Mountain Preliminary Site Suitability Evaluation

This is in response to the DOE's request for comment on the Yucca Mountain Preliminary Site Suitability Evaluation. As I understand, the Secretary of Energy will be making a recommendation, in the next few months, to the President on the suitability of this site for development as a repository for spent nuclear fuel and high level radioactive waste. This is an important decision for the nation. As a member of the public, I am offering my views on this matter.

My views are shaped by my many years of education, my professional background, and my attitude towards the need for proper government policy making. I have had graduate education in nuclear technology (PhD in Nuclear Physics and MS in Nuclear Engineering). My professional nuclear engineering experience spans over 27 years and includes the areas of reactor core neutronic design; radioactivity; fission product generation, decay, transport, and effect on environment and the public; and probability and consequences of malfunctions and accidents of systems designed and operated to contain radioactivity in commercial nuclear power generating facilities.

Two important questions bearing on this decision are:

Is it needed?

Is it adequately safe ?

I think the answer to the need question is **yes**, as seen in the following discussion.

To ensure the economic well being of the nation, adequate energy must be made available. Nuclear power has been providing an important contribution to the nation's energy need in a safe and reliable manner. Considering the large projected need for additional electric generation in the future, the nation must rely on additional nuclear power generation since this technology provides fuel diversity, stable generation cost, environmental compatibility, and domestic self-sufficiency. A prudent national energy policy, as currently being articulated in the nation, would place an important role for nuclear generation. And to provide the enabling condition for a sustained nuclear power generation in the nation, a permanent disposal option for the spent nuclear fuel, as being intended by the Yucca Mountain Project, is essential.

On the equally important question of safety, numerous, in-depth scientific and engineering studies have been ongoing in over two decades to devise the transportation and storage systems properly and to confirm that the site can safely contain the material, considering the geological, hydrological, and seismological characteristics. These studies have undergone many careful peer and critical reviews. The scientific conclusion seems to be that it would be very safe to store the anticipated volume of material at this site without undue danger to the affected communities.

Thus there is overwhelming scientific basis, considering the need for this facility and its safety, for the Secretary of Energy to proceed with a positive recommendation to the President.

This decision is something that lots of people would dislike. But for the well being of the nation at large and recognizing that the affected communities are not endangered, this action must be taken, whether we all like it or not.

In my view, sound public policy making should be reasoned on available good science and not on emotion and feelings.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on this important matter and urge the Secretary to make a positive recommendation to the President.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "P.M. Abraham".

P.M. Abraham  
1710 Chestnut Lane  
Matthews, NC 28104.